

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 9, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As Members of Congress who spend substantial periods of time with our families, staffs and colleagues in the District of Columbia, and as United States Representatives who must take into account the basic needs and interests of 705,000 federal tax-paying American citizens who live in the District yet have no representation in the U.S. Senate and whose own elected representative to the House is denied a vote, we write to express our outrage about the decision to shortchange the District of hundreds of millions of dollars in urgently needed relief under the \$2.2 trillion COVID-19 legislation that was recently signed into law.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) includes direct aid to states to help them respond to the many public health and economic challenges posed by the coronavirus outbreak. But the allocation formula for these direct grants inexplicably breaks from overwhelming precedent and treats the District of Columbia like a federal territory rather than a state, meaning that it will receive about \$500 million rather than the \$1.25 billion minimum allotted to the states. The District will lose out on \$750 million in essential funding during this crisis.

This decision is a scandalous departure from practice that dramatically increases health risks for everyone who lives and works in the District, a massive group that includes Members of Congress, our Capitol Hill staffs and our families.

The District of Columbia is home to 705,000 people, a population larger than that of two states, and its citizens pay more in federal tax dollars than people in 22 states. District residents pay the same federal taxes as state residents, which is why the District has been treated like a state under almost all federal grant programs—and not like U.S. territories, whose citizens do not pay individual federal income taxes (although they do pay other kinds of federal taxes).

There is no principled reason to abandon the customary practice of grouping the District with the states when it comes to the state aid grants in the CARES Act, and there are urgently compelling public health reasons to correct this affront to the local community. The District of Columbia is treating more than 1,500 COVID-19 cases and has already seen 33 deaths in the community. Its caseload is growing sharply along with those in neighboring Maryland and Virginia and the rest of the country.

The District is doing its part to fight the spread of the virus, but its economy has been hard hit by the necessary closures of many of the city's business, governmental and tourist sites. As the Nation's Capital, the city where we meet, where essential government functions are located, and where millions of our constituents travel every year, the District's ability to meet the full economic and health needs of its population will have direct consequences for the wellbeing of our own constituents, our communities and ourselves. We are one nation and there is no reason to cheat the people of the District, who actually pay more per capita in federal taxes than the people of any state.

We appreciate that Speaker Pelosi has already pledged to fight for retroactive full COVID-19 funding for the District. We hope this will become a unifying, bipartisan and bicameral point of agreement which demonstrates our commitment to the unity of the American people and that it can be enacted as soon as possible.

Very truly yours,



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Additional Cosigners:

Rep. Alma S. Adams

Rep. Nanette Diaz Barragán

Rep. Karen Bass

Rep. Donald S. Beyer, Jr.

Rep. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.

Rep. Earl Blumenauer

Rep. Suzanne Bonamici

Rep. Anthony G. Brown

Rep. Julia Brownley

Rep. André Carson

Rep. Kathy Castor

Rep. Judy Chu

Rep. Yvette D. Clarke

Rep. Wm. Lacy Clay
Rep. Emanuel Cleaver
Rep. David Cicilline
Rep. Gerald E. Connolly
Rep. Jim Costa
Rep. Henry Cuellar
Rep. Danny K. Davis
Rep. Madeleine Dean
Rep. Diana DeGette
Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro
Rep. Val Butler Demings
Rep. Theodore E. Deutch
Rep. Debbie Dingell
Rep. Eliot L. Engel
Rep. Anna G. Eshoo
Rep. Adriano Espaillat
Rep. Dwight Evans
Rep. Marcia L. Fudge
Rep. Ruben Gallego
Rep. Jesús G. “Chuy” García
Rep. Sylvia R. Garcia
Rep. Jimmy Gomez
Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva
Rep. Debra A. Haaland
Rep. Alcee L. Hastings
Rep. Jahana Hayes
Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee
Rep. Pramila Jayapal
Rep. Hakeem S. Jeffries

Rep. Henry C. “Hank” Johnson, Jr.

Rep. Marcy Kaptur

Rep. Robin L. Kelly

Rep. Ro Khanna

Rep. John B. Larson

Rep. Brenda L. Lawrence

Rep. Barbara Lee

Rep. Ted Lieu

Rep. Alan S. Lowenthal

Rep. Stephen F. Lynch

Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney

Rep. Betty McCollum

Rep. A. Donald McEachin

Rep. James P. McGovern

Rep. Gregory W. Meeks

Rep. Grace Meng

Rep. Gwen Moore

Rep. Seth Moulton

Rep. Jerrold Nadler

Rep. Grace F. Napolitano

Rep. Joe Neguse

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

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Rep. Rashida Tlaib
Rep. David J. Trone
Rep. Lauren Underwood
Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez
Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman
Rep. Peter Welch
Rep. Jennifer Wexton
Rep. Susan Wild
Rep. John A. Yarmuth